

Farmington Valley Collaborative

A Voluntary Association of Farmington Valley Towns

February 20, 2009

Dear Senator Harp, Representative Geragosian, and Members of the Appropriations Committee:

As municipal leaders, we are writing to inform you that the Governors' proposed cuts to health districts will have a serious impact on the public health and safety of residents across the State.

The Farmington Valley Collaborative is a voluntary association consisting of seven member Towns representing a population of approximately 100,000 residents. Of these seven Towns, six are members of the Farmington Valley Health District. The Governor's proposed budget reduces the state contribution to the Farmington Valley Health District by 45% in a time of greatly diminished income from user fees, and an inability of member Towns to make up the revenue shortfall. If the Towns have to make up the loss in state funding, it would require a \$.85 per capita increase in the local contribution of member Towns.

The impact of the Governor's proposed budget would have similar impacts on Health Districts across the state. The present level of per capita funding for local health departments is \$5,347,208.98 and provides funding to 31 full time municipal health departments, 20 health districts (comprised of 113 towns), and 34 part time health departments. The present Per Capita Grant helps provide full time public health services for 3,257,281 residents of the state or 92.8% of the state's population.

In addition, under the Governor's proposed budget, seven of the current 20 health districts would be eliminated because of the new definition of "regional health departments." These are districts that are composed of only 2 towns and/or have populations of less than 50,000. The reduction of these 20 health districts would impact 391,814 state residents. This equates to an impact on approximately 11.2% of the State's population.

Under the Governor's proposed budget, Per Capita Grant funds for local health departments will be cut by \$2,347,208 to \$3,000,000 resulting in the elimination of funding to 31 full time municipal health departments that provide services to 1,678,785 state residents or 47.8% of the state's population.

In a broader sense, reducing the state per capita contribution from \$2.08 to \$1.25 to "Regional Health Departments" is actually a disincentive to regionalization, and it will cause some serious soul searching about the benefits of being a member of these regional organizations. This proposed reduction is taking place against a back drop of increased state mandates, and continued nation wide disease outbreaks such as the ongoing Salmonella outbreak. The forced reductions in staff and services caused by the proposed cuts will expose the population of Connecticut and the Farmington Valley to increased levels of disease and environmental degradation.

Philip Schenck
Town of Avon
Town Manager

William Smith
Town of Granby
Town Manager

Richard Barlow
Town of Canton
First Selectman

Jim Hayden
Town of East Granby
First Selectman

Mary Glassman
Town of Simsbury
First Selectman

Kathleen Eagen
Town of Farmington
Town Manager